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The Round River Drive

Ames Forestry Club

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The Round River Drive

'Twas '64 or '65
We drove the great Round River drive;
'Twas '65 or '64—
Yes, it was during of the war,
Or it was after or before.

Those were the days in Wisconsin,
The good old days when any man
Could cut and skid and haul,
And there was pine enough for all.

Then all the logger had to do
Was find some timber that was new
Beside a stream, he knew it ran
To Wausau or to Markasan.
That at the place a mill there was
To take the timber for the saws.
(In those old days the pioneer
He need not read his title clear
To mansions there or timber here.)

Paul Bunyan, (you have heard of Paul)
He was the king pin of them all,
The greatest logger of the land;
He had a punch in either hand
And licked more men and drove more miles
And got more drunk in more new styles
Than any other peavey prince
Before, or then, or ever since.

Paul Bunyan bossed that famous crew;
A bunch of shouting bruisers, too—
Black Dan McDonald, Tom McCan,
Dutch Jake, Rex Murphy, Dirty Dan,
And other Dans from black to red,
With Curly Charley Yellow-head,
And Pasty Ward from off the Clam,
The kind of gang to break a jam,
To clean a bar or rassel rum,
Or give a twenty to a bum.

Paul Bunyan and his fighting crew;
In '64 or '5 or '2,
Started out to find the pines
Without much thought of section lines,
So west by north they made their way,
One hundred miles, until one day
They found good timber logging land,
With roaring water close at hand.

Now near the camp there was a spring
That used to steam like everything.
One day the tote team brought supplies,
Had on a load of mammoth size,
A load of beans. Just on the road
Beside the spring he ditched his load,
And all those beans, the bloomin' mess,
Fell in the spring—ten tons, I guess.
He came to camp expecting he—
Would get from Bunyan the G. B.
But Joe the cook, a French Canuck,
Said, "Paul, I teenk it is ze luck—
Zem spring so hot, so Paul pardon,
And we will have ze grand bouillon."

To prove the teamster not at fault,
He took some pepper, pork and salt,
A right proportion each of these
And threw them in among the beans,
And got enough, and good soup, too,
To last the whole of winter through.
The rest of the men were kind of glad
He spilt the beans when soup was had—
Except the flunkies; they were mad
Because each day they had to tramp
Three miles and tote the soup to camp.

Joe had a stove, "**some** furnace," too,
The size for such a hungry crew.
Say what you will, it is the meat,
The pie and sinkers, choppers eat
That get results; it is the beans
And spuds that are the best machines
For fallin' Norway, skiddin' pine,
And keepin' hemlock drives in line.

This stove of Joe's, it was a rig
For cookin' grub, that was so big
It took a solid cord of wood
To get a fire goin' good.
The flunkies cleaned three forties bare
Each week to keep a fire there.
The stove's dimensions, south to north,
From east to west and so forth,
I don't remember just exact,
And do not like to state the fact
Unless I know the fact is true,
For I would hate deceiving you.
But I remember once that Joe
Put in a mammoth batch of dough,
And then went around the other side,
To take it out; at least he tried.
The stove it was so far around,
That long before the bend he turned,
The bread not only baked, but burned.

We had two young coons for flunkies, Sam
And Tom. Joe used to strap a ham
On each foot of both of them
And we had pancakes each A. M.
They'd skate around the stove lids for
An hour or so and maybe more,
And grease them for him. But one day
Old Pink-eye Martin (anyway he couldn't
See so very good),
Old Pink-eye he misunderstood
Which was the baking powder can
And in the dough, eight fingers ran
Of powder, blastin'—powder black—
Those niggers never did come back—
They touched a cake, a flash, and poof!
Went Sam and Tommie through the roof.
We hunted for a month or so,
But never found them—that, you know,
Was the winter of the black snow.

We put one hundred million feet
On skids that winter; hard to beat
You say it was. It was some crew.
We took it off one forty, too.
A hundred million feet we skid—
That forty was a pyramid;
It ran up skyward to a peak—
To see the tip would take a week.
The top of it, it seems to me
Was far as twenty men could see;
But down below the stuff we slides,
For there was trees on every side.

And, by the way, a funny thing
Occurred in early spring.
One day we saw some deer tracks there
As big as that of any bear.
Old Forty Jones (he's straw boss on
The side those deer had gone),
He didn't do a thing, but he
Thinks out a scheme, and him and me
We set a key log in a pile
And watched that night for quite a while,
And when the deer came down to drink,
We tripped the key log in a wink.
We killed two hundred in the herd—
For Forty's scheme was sure a bird.
Enough of venison we had got,
To last all winter with one shot.

Paul Bunyan had the biggest steer
That ever was in camp that year.
Nine horses he'd outpull and skid—
He weighed ten thousand pounds, he did.
The barn boss, (handy man besides)
Made him a harness of all the hides
Of all the deer, (it took 'em all)
And Pink-eye Martin used to haul
His stove wood in. 'Member yet
How buckskin stretches when it's wet?
One day when he was hauling wood
(A dead stub that was dry and good),
One cloudy day, it started in
To raining like the very sin.
Well, Pink-eye pounded on the ox

And beat him over roads and rocks
To camp. He landed there all right,
And turned around—no log in sight;
But down the road, around the bend,
Those tugs were stretching without end.
Well, Pink-eye goes in to eat,
The sun comes out with lots of heat,
And dries the buckskin that was damp,
And snapped the log right into camp.

That was a pretty lucky crew,
And yet they had some hard luck, too.
You've heard of Phalen, double jawed?
He had two sets of teeth that sawed
Through almost anything. One night
He sure did use his molars right.
While walking in his sleep he hit
The filers rack and after it,
Then with the stone trough he collides
Which made him sore and mad besides.
Before he wakes, so mad was he,
That long before he gets his wits
He chawed that grindstone into bits.

But still we did not miss it so,
For to the top we used to go
And from the forty's topmost crown
We'd start the big stones rolling down.
We'd lay an axe on every one
And follow it upon the run;
And, when we reached the lowest edge
Each axe, it had a razor edge.

Jim Liverpool, for instance, bet
Across the river he could get
By jumpin', and he won it, too.
He got the laugh on half the crew;
For twice in air he stops and humps,
And makes the river in three jumps.
We didn't have no booze around
For every fellow that we found
And sent to town for applejack
Would drink it all up coming back.

One day the cookie, paring spuds,
He hears a sizzling in the suds,
And finds the peelings, strange to say,
Are all fermenting where they lay.
Now Sour-face Murphy in the door
Was standing, and the face he wore
Convinced the first assistant cook
That Murphy soured them with his look.
And when we had the parin's drained,
A quart of Irish booze remained.

The cook, he tells the tale to Paul,
And Paul takes Murphy off the haul
And gives him very willingly
A job as camp distillery.

At last, a hundred million in,
'Twas time for drivin' to begin.
We broke our rollways in a rush
And started through the rain and slush
To drive that hundred million down
Until we reached some saw mill town.
We didn't know the river's name,
Nor where to some one's mill it came
But figured that, without a doubt,
To some good town 'twould fetch us out
If we observed the usual plan
And drove the way the current ran.

Well, after we had driven for
At least two weeks and maybe more,
We came upon a pyramid
That looked just like our forty did.

Some two weeks more and then we passed
A camp that looked just like the last.
Two weeks again, another, too,
That looked like our camp came into view.

Then Bunyan called us all ashore
And held a council—like of war.
He said that with all this lumbering,
Our logs would never fetch a thing.
The next day after, Silver Jim,
He had his wits scared out of him;
For while he's breaking of a jam